WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of managing grammars used in a speech recognition system, comprising:

loading a first grammar in a CFG engine;

implementing an engine-independent SR interface
between the CFG engine and a speech
recognition (SR) engine;

communicating words in the first grammar to the
SR engine through the SR interface;

notifying the SR engine, through the SR
interface, of rules in the first grammar;
and

representing the rules in the first grammar to
the SR engine through the SR interface.

2. The method of claim 1 and further comprising:

receiving rule queries from the SR engine
through the SR interface; and

providing rule information to the SR engine,
through the SR interface, the rule
information enabling the SR engine to
construct an internal representation of the
first grammar.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein providing the rule information includes providing a rule identifier, a rule level indicator indicating a level of a corresponding rule, state information representing states in the corresponding rule and transition

information representing transitions in the
corresponding rule.

4.   The method of claim 1 and further comprising:
      loading a second grammar in the CFG engine; and
      representing the first and second grammars to
            the SR engine, through the SR interface, as
            a single grammar.

5.   The method of claim 4 wherein representing the
first and second grammars to the SR engine comprises:
      communicating words in the second grammar to the
            SR engine through the SR interface;
      notifying the SR engine, through the interface,
            of rules in the second grammar; and
      representing the rules in the second grammar to
            the SR engine through the interface.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein communicating
words in the second grammar to the SR engine
comprises:
      communicating only new words in the second
            grammar, not in the first grammar, to the
            SR engine through the SR interface.

7.   The method of claim 1 and further comprising:
      implementing an application-independent
            application interface between the CFG
            engine and an application.

8. The method of claim 7 and further comprising:
    receiving an activation input from the
        application, through the application
        interface, indicating which of the rules
        are to be active; and
    providing an activation indication from the CFG
        engine, through the interface, to the SR
        engine to indicate which of the rules are
        active, based on the activation input.

9. The method of claim 7 and further comprising:
    receiving from the application, through the
        application interface, a change indication,
        indicating a change to the first grammar;
        and
    determining, in the CFG engine, whether content
        of a rule in the first grammar is to be
        changed, based on the change indication;
        and
    if so, providing an invalidation indication to
        the SR engine, through the SR interface,
        indicating the first grammar is to be
        invalidated.

10. The method of claim 9 and further comprising:
    receiving queries from the SR engine through the
    SR interface; and

in response to the queries, providing word and
rule information to the SR engine through
the SR interface, the word and rule
information enabling the SR engine to
construct an internal representation of the
first grammar with the change.

11.   The method of claim 9 and further comprising:
if the content of a rule in the first grammar is
not to be changed, but a word or rule is to
be added, providing an indication to the SR
engine through the SR interface to add the
word or rule to the SR engine.

12.   The method of claim 1 and further comprising:
determining in the CFG engine whether the first
grammar refers to any additional grammars;
and
if so, loading the additional grammars in the
CFG engine.

13.   The method of claim 12 and further comprising:
representing the first and additional grammars
to the SR engine, through the SR interface,
as a single grammar.

14.   The method of claim 13 and further comprising:
communicating words in the additional grammars
to the SR engine through the SR interface;

notifying the SR engine, through the SR
interface, of rules in the additional
grammars; and

representing the rules in the additional
grammars to the SR engine through the SR
interface.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein communicating
words in the first grammar to the SR engine through
the SR interface comprises:
providing a word handle to the SR engine
identifying each word.

16. A method of parsing a speech recognition result
from a speech recognition (SR) engine, comprising:
receiving the result from the SR engine at a
context-free grammar (CFG) engine having an
interface component exposing methods to
implement an engine-independent interface
to the SR engine and an application-
independent interface to an application;
and

parsing the result at the CFG engine to obtain a
parsed result; and

providing the parsed result to the application
from the CFG engine.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein receiving the
result comprises:

receiving a rule identifier identifying a rule in a CFG that spawned the result; and

receiving a plurality of transition identifiers identifying transitions through the rule that spawned the result.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein parsing comprises:

constructing an indication of a parse tree based on the rule identifier and the plurality of transition identifiers; and

providing the indication of the parse tree from the CFG engine to the application through the application-independent interface.

19. A middleware component between an application and a speech recognition (SR) engine, comprising:

a context-free grammar (CFG) engine configured to receive a first grammar from the application and represent the first grammar to the SR engine; and

an interface component coupled to the CFG engine, exposing methods to provide an application-independent interface to the application and an engine-independent interface to the SR engine.

20. The middleware component of claim 19 wherein the CFG engine is configured to notify the SR engine,

through the interface component, of words in the first grammar.

21. The middleware component of claim 19 wherein the CFG engine is configured to receive a plurality of different grammars and represent the plurality of different grammars to the SR engine, through the interface component, as a single grammar.

22. The middleware component of claim 19 wherein the CFG engine is configured to determine whether the first grammar refers to any additional grammars.

23. The middleware component of claim 22 wherein the CFG engine is configured to load the additional grammars referred to by the first grammar and to represent the first grammar and the additional grammars to the SR engine, through the interface component, as a single grammar.

24. The middleware component of claim 23 wherein the CFG engine is configured to represent the first and additional grammars as a single grammar by providing substantially only word, rule and transition information indicative of words, rules and transitions in the first and additional grammars, regardless of a grammar containing the words, rules and transitions.

25. The middleware component of claim 19 wherein the CFG engine is configured to receive change information indicative of changes to the first grammar and to provide an invalidation output to the SR engine, through the interface, invalidating the first grammar in the SR engine.

26. The middleware component of claim 25 wherein the CFG engine is configured to receive a plurality of queries from the SR engine, through the interface, and to represent the first grammar, with the changes, to the SR engine in response to the queries.

27. A computer readable medium including instructions which, when implemented by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of managing grammars used in a speech recognition system, comprising:

    loading a first grammar in a CFG engine;

    implementing an engine-independent SR interface between the CFG engine and a speech recognition (SR) engine;

    communicating words in the first grammar to the SR engine through the SR interface;

    notifying the SR engine, through the SR interface, of rules in the first grammar; and

    representing the rules in the first grammar to the SR engine through the SR interface.

28. A computer readable medium including instructions which, when implemented by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of parsing a speech recognition result from a speech recognition (SR) engine, comprising:

> receiving the result from the SR engine at a
>> context-free grammar (CFG) engine having an interface component exposing methods to implement an engine-independent interface to the SR engine and an application-independent interface to an application; and

> parsing the result at the CFG engine to obtain a
>> parsed result; and
>> providing the parsed result to the application from the CFG engine.